



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Olympia, WA 98504-5000

February 8, 2006

Dear Children's Administration Contracted Community Partners:

In July 2005, I wrote to you about a project to review Children's Administration service contracts. I announced an independently led review of contracts as part of a continuing effort to strengthen services to children and families and to enhance our business practices and financial accountability. I invited you to attend one of three meetings to provide your comments regarding strengthening contracted services.

Over three hundred individuals attended these meetings. Attendees identified the following issues as important in the business partnership between the Children's Administration and community based providers of service.

- Need for planning time to react to policy and budget changes coming from the Children's Administration.
- Predictability of referrals in order to manage business.
- Consistency of communication from headquarters down to line staff regarding expectations for services provided to clients.
- Respect for the administrative requirements of contractors by providing timely payments and contracts.
- Good communication channels.
- Ability to discuss contract requirements, especially those provisions which require more administrative process.

Using the information gathered at the meetings, we began an internal assessment of many of our contracted services in mid-August and completed most of those by October 2005. We are now beginning the internal assessment of the rest of our contracts.

The purpose of the internal assessment is to identify if there are any areas needing improvement to move contracted services closer to the following goals which were outlined at the meetings last summer.

- Effective and efficient contracted services which have demonstrated outcomes are available to match client needs:
 - Significant increase in use of performance based contracts
 - Use of Evidence Based Practice where appropriate.
- Effective and efficient contracted services are available to clients in all Regions.
- Strengthened business partnership between Children's Administration and contractors.

To start the process, we would like you to tell us how we can improve our business partnership with you. If you haven't already, you will soon receive a Service Provider Questionnaire. Please fill it in and return it. We are committed to making improvements to strengthen our business partnership with you and will maximize the capacity to achieve this with your participation.

As a result of the review process, we have identified the following set of minimum requirements for contracts extended beyond July 1, 2006.

- A fully-executed contract with current Children's Administration language.
- Services provided must be outlined in the Statement of Work.
- For 1/12 monthly payments, contracts must contain a budget, monthly invoice documenting expenditure, and language regarding a periodic reconciliation report and our ability to recoup unspent funds.

Community-based services are an integral part of the state's child welfare system. Our goal in this process is to have better and more accessible services statewide.

Thank you again for your involvement and commitment to improving services to children and their families. If you have questions, please let us know by calling Jean Croisant at 360-902-7522.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl Stephani". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Cheryl Stephani
Assistant Secretary
Children's Administration